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THE SAGA OF JOHNNY BLAZE: Once, not so long ago, he was the pawn of Satan. He has since been freed. But, for reasons he cannot yet comprehend, he still possesses Satan-spawned strength and the searing touch of hellfire. Whether these supernatural powers are a blessing or a curse, he does not know. Yet.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE GHOST RIDER!™

AT THE MERCY OF THE MANTICORE!

AS EVENING FELL, JOHNNY BLAZE FLED LOS ANGELES, LEAVING BEHIND THE SHATTERED PIECES OF HIS LIFE, PERHAPS FOREVER!
HE HAS RIDDEN THROUGH THE NIGHT LIKE A MAN PURSUED, STRUGGLING TO PUT THE SERENE EXPANSE OF THE MOJAVE DESERT BETWEEN HIMSELF AND HIS SORROW...
...BUT AS DAWN WASHES THE LANDSCAPE IN EERIE CRIMSON, HIS MIND IS STILL IN TURMOIL, FOR HE IS THE GHOST RIDER, AND THE HELL-BORN SPIRIT FESTERS WITHIN HIM, ALLOWING HIS SOUL NO PEACE.
SHOOTER/SCRIPT ★ PERLIN/ART GREEN/INKS ★ WOHL/LETTERS MOULY/COLOR ★ GOODWIN/EDITOR

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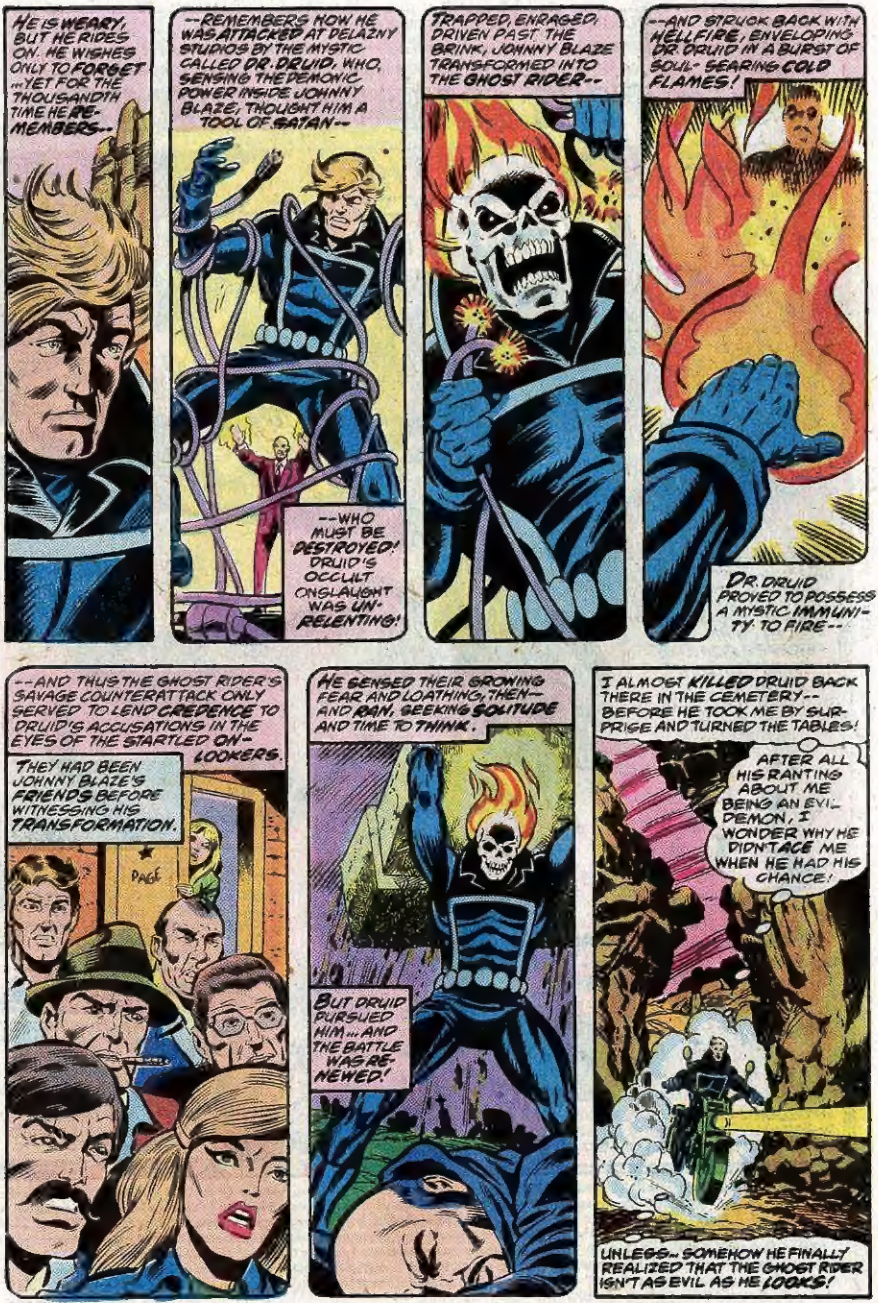
He is weary, but he rides on. He wishes only to forget ...yet for the thousandth time he remembers--
--remembers how he was attacked at Delazny Studios by the mystic called Dr. Druid, who, sensing the demonic power inside Johnny Blaze, thought him a tool of Satan--
--who must be destroyed! Druid's occult onslaught was unrelenting!
Trapped, enraged, driven past the brink, Johnny Blaze transformed into the Ghost Rider--
--and struck back with hellfire, enveloping Dr. Druid in a burst of soul-searing cold flames!
Dr. Druid proved to possess a mystic immunity to fire--
--and thus the Ghost Rider's savage counterattack only served to lend credence to Druid's accusations in the eyes of the startled on-lookers.
They had been Johnny Blaze's friends before witnessing his transformation.
PAGE
He sensed their growing fear and loathing, then--and ran, seeking solitude and time to think.
But Druid pursued him... and the battle was renewed!
I almost killed Druid back there in the cemetery--before he took me by surprise and turned the tables!
After all his ranting about me being an evil demon, I wonder why he didn't ace me when he had his chance!
Unless... somehow he finally realized that the Ghost Rider isn't as evil as he looks!

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SO HE LET ME LIVE! BIG DEAL! MY WHOLE LIFE IS RUINED! I CAN'T EVER GO BACK TO MY JOB AT THE STUDIO, NOW THAT ALL MY FRIENDS THINK I'M SOME KIND OF MONSTER!
THEN, AGAIN... I AM A MONSTER, SORT OF! I SUPPOSE THEY HAD TO FIND OUT SOONER OR LATER!
BESIDES, MY LIFE HAD BEEN PRETTY MESSED UP ANYWAY SINCE ROXY DUMPED ME FOR THAT ROGER CROSS GUY!
I DESERVED IT, TOO, FOR STRINGING HER ALONG WHILE I WAS RUNNING AROUND WITH KAREN PAGE!
FUNNY... NOW THAT I'LL NEVER SEE EITHER OF THEM AGAIN, ROXY'S THE ONE I REALLY MISS! I WAS A REAL JERK TO LET KAREN'S CLASSY CHASSIS DAZZLE ME SO MUCH!
--I'M THE BEST DAMNED STUNT-RIDER WHO EVER STRADDLED A CYCLE!
OH, WELL... AT LEAST I AM ALIVE... AND I HAVE A BIKE UNDER ME AND SOME BREAD I SAVED UP!
AND I'VE GOT ONE OTHER LITTLE THING GOING FOR ME--
AND I LOVE IT!

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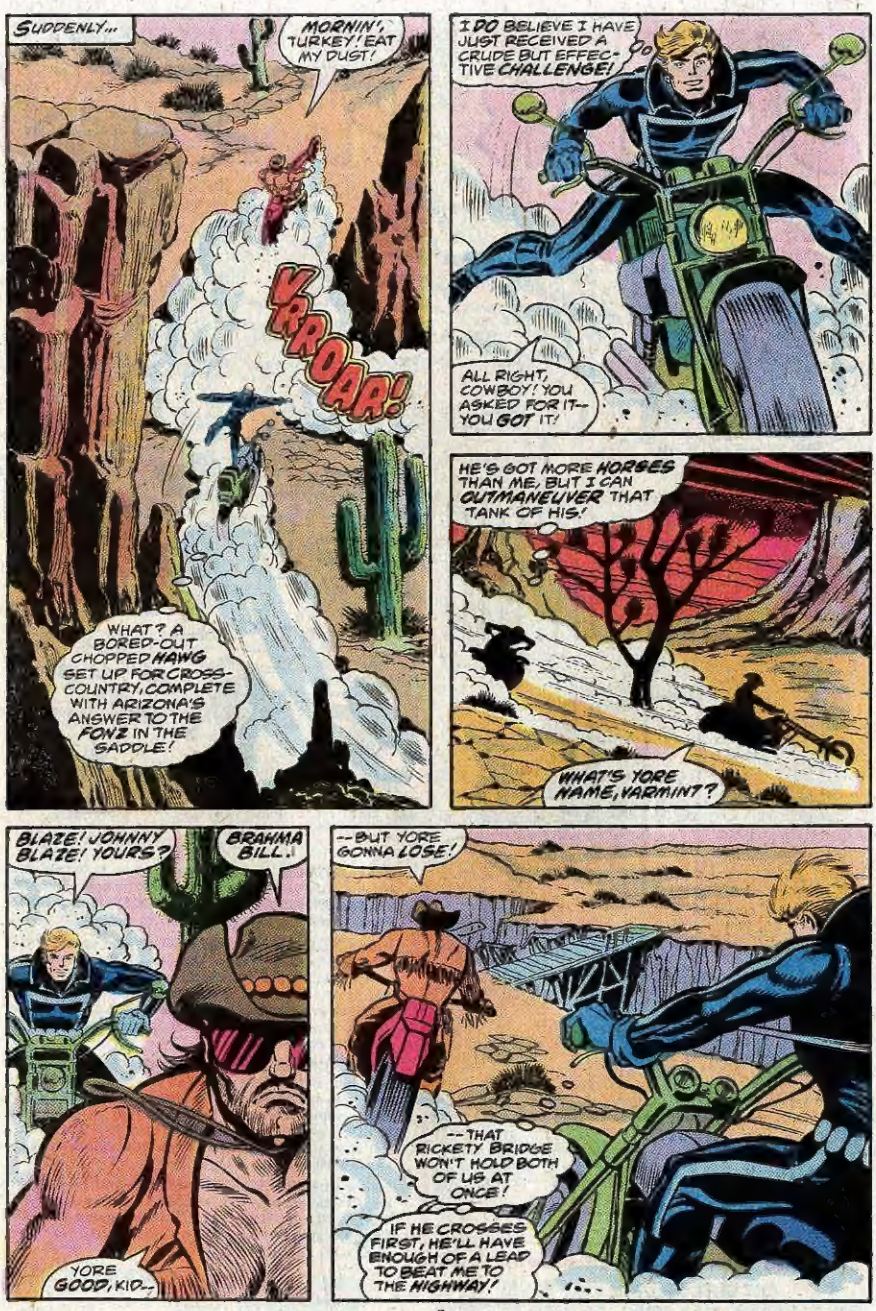
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VRROAR!
WHAT? A BORED-OUT CHOPPED HAWG SET UP FOR CROSS-COUNTRY, COMPLETE WITH ARIZONA'S ANSWER TO THE FONZ IN THE SADDLE!
I DO BELIEVE I HAVE JUST RECEIVED A CRUDE BUT EFFECTIVE CHALLENGE!
ALL RIGHT, COWBOY! YOU ASKED FOR IT-- YOU GOT IT!
HE'S GOT MORE HORSES THAN ME, BUT I CAN OUTMANEUVER THAT TANK OF HIS!
WHAT'S YORE NAME, VARMINT?
BLAZE! JOHNNY BLAZE! YOURS?
BRAHMA BILL.!
YORE GOOD, KID--
--BUT YORE GONNA LOSE!
--THAT RICKETY BRIDGE WON'T HOLD BOTH OF US AT ONCE!
IF HE CROSSES FIRST, HE'LL HAVE ENOUGH OF A LEAD TO BEAT ME TO THE HIGHWAY!

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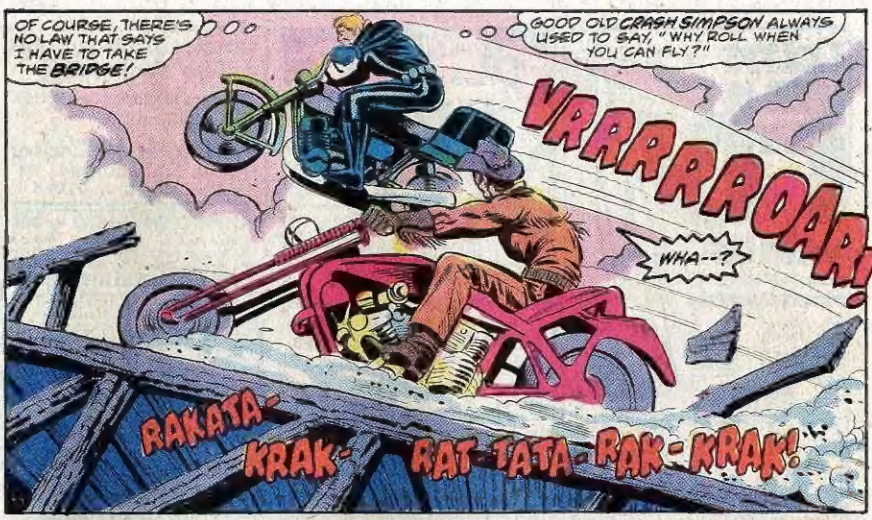
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GOOD OLD CRASH SIMPSON ALWAYS USED TO SAY, "WHY ROLL WHEN YOU CAN FLY?"
VRRRROAR!
WHA--?
RAKATA-
KRAK-
RAT-TATA-RAK-KRAK!

BESIDES, THAT CRUMMY BRIDGE IS PROBABLY MORE DANGEROUS THAN THE JUMP!
BYE, BRAHMA!
HO-LEE--! I'LL BE SKINNED, THAT LITTLE SIDE-WINDER'S GONNA BEAT ME!
RROO-OOM!

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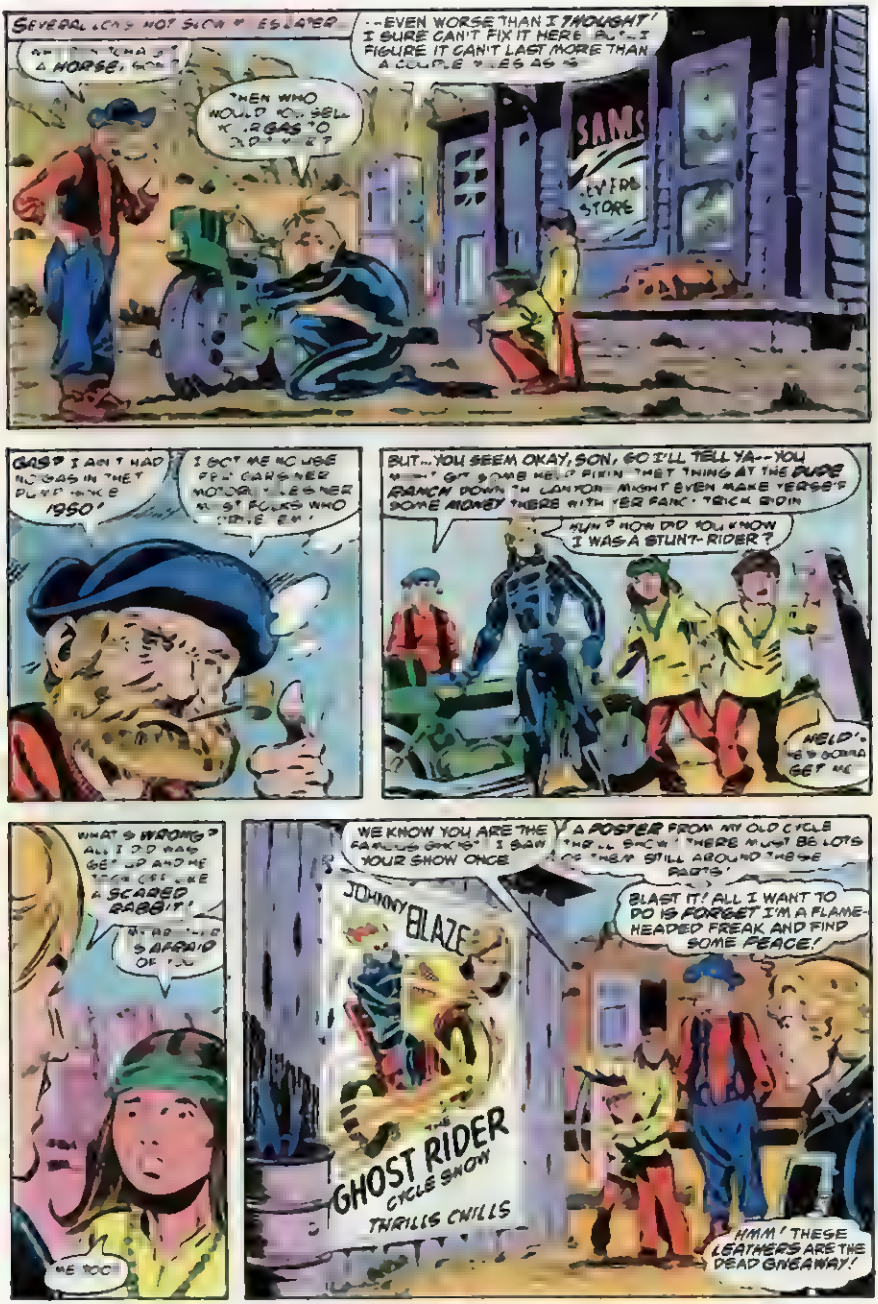
SEVERAL LONG HOT SUCH 'N' ESSES LATER...
A HORSE, SON!
--EVEN WORSE THAN I THOUGHT! I SURE CAN'T FIX IT HERE BUT--I FIGURE IT CAN'T LAST MORE THAN A COUPLE MILES AS IS
SAM'S TIRE STORE
GAS? I AIN'T HAD NO GAS IN THET PUMP SINCE 1950!
I GOT ME NO USE FER GASOLINE MOTORS. LESS'N MOST FOLKS WHO RIDE 'EM!
BUT... YOU SEEM OKAY, SON, SO I'LL TELL YA--YOU MIGHT GIT SOME HELP FIXIN' THET THING AT THE DUDE RANCH DOWN IN LANTOW. MIGHT EVEN MAKE YERSELF SOME MONEY THERE WITH YER PANK' TRICK RIDIN
HUH? HOW DID YOU KNOW I WAS A STUNT-RIDER?
HELP! HE'S GONNA GET ME!
WHAT'S WRONG? ALL I DID WAS GET UP AND ME TOO GET LIKE A SCARED RABBIT!
WE KNOW YOU ARE THE FAMOUS GHOST RIDER! I SAW YOUR SHOW ONCE
A POSTER FROM MY OLD CYCLE THRILL SHOW! THERE MUST BE LOTS OF THEM STILL AROUND THESE PARTS!
BLAST IT! ALL I WANT TO DO IS FORGET I'M A FLAME-HEADED FREAK AND FIND SOME PEACE!
JOHNNY BLAZE
THE GHOST RIDER CYCLE SHOW
THRILLS CHILLS
HMM! THESE LEATHERS ARE THE DEAD GIVEAWAY!

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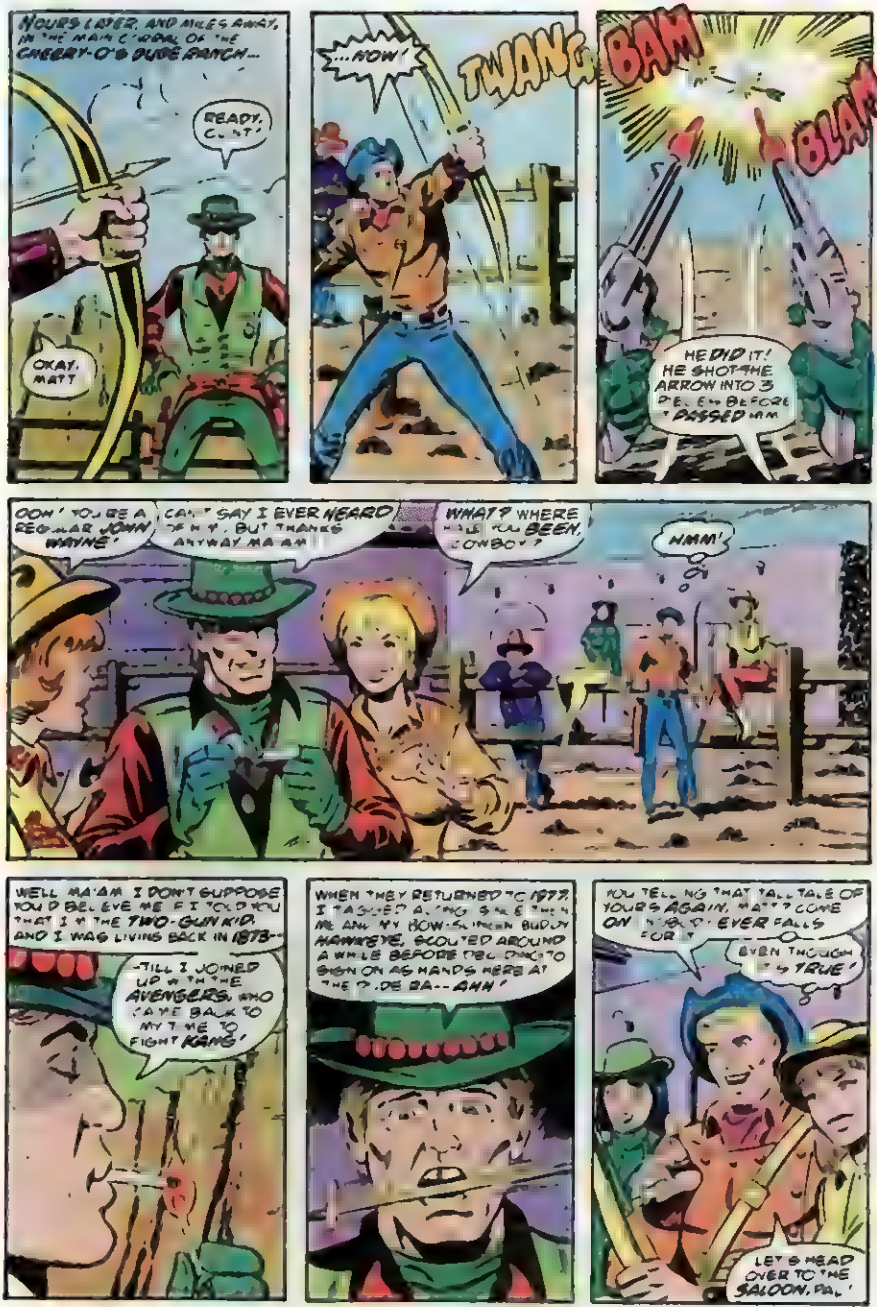
HOURS LATER, AND MILES AWAY, IN THE MAIN CHORAL OF THE CHEERY-O'S DUDE RANCH...
READY, CUTE?
OKAY, MATT
...NOW!
TWANG
BAM
BLAM
HE DID IT! HE SHOT THE ARROW INTO 3 DIFFERENT BEFORE IT PASSED HMM
OOH! YOU'RE A REGULAR JOHN WAYNE!
CAN'T SAY I EVER HEARD OF HIM. BUT THANKS ANYWAY MA'AM
WHAT? WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN, COWBOY?
HMM!
WELL MA'AM I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU'D BELIEVE ME IF I TOLD YOU THAT I'M THE TWO-GUN KID, AND I WAS LIVING BACK IN 1873--
--TILL I JOINED UP WITH THE AVENGERS, WHO SAVE BACK TO MY TIME TO FIGHT KANG!
WHEN THEY RETURNED TO 1973, I TRACKED ALONG SOME TIME WITH MY BOW-SLINGIN' BUDDY HAWKEYE, SCOUTED AROUND A WHILE BEFORE DECIDING TO SIGN ON AS HANDS HERE AT THE O.K. CORRAL--AHH!
YOU TELLING THAT TALL TALE OF YOURS AGAIN, MATT? COME ON, NICKI! EVER FALLS FOR IT
EVEN THOUGH IT'S TRUE!
LET'S HEAD OVER TO THE SALOON, PAL!

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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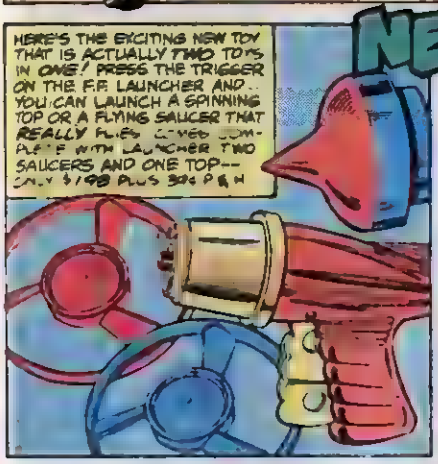

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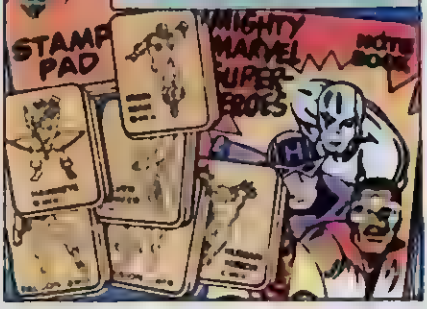

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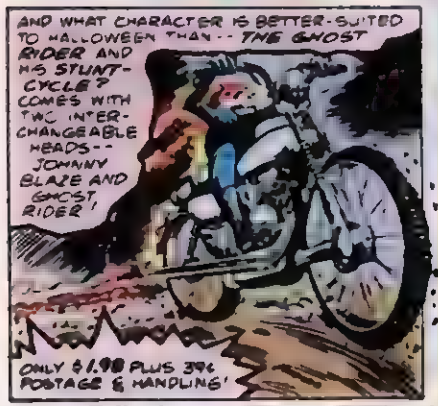

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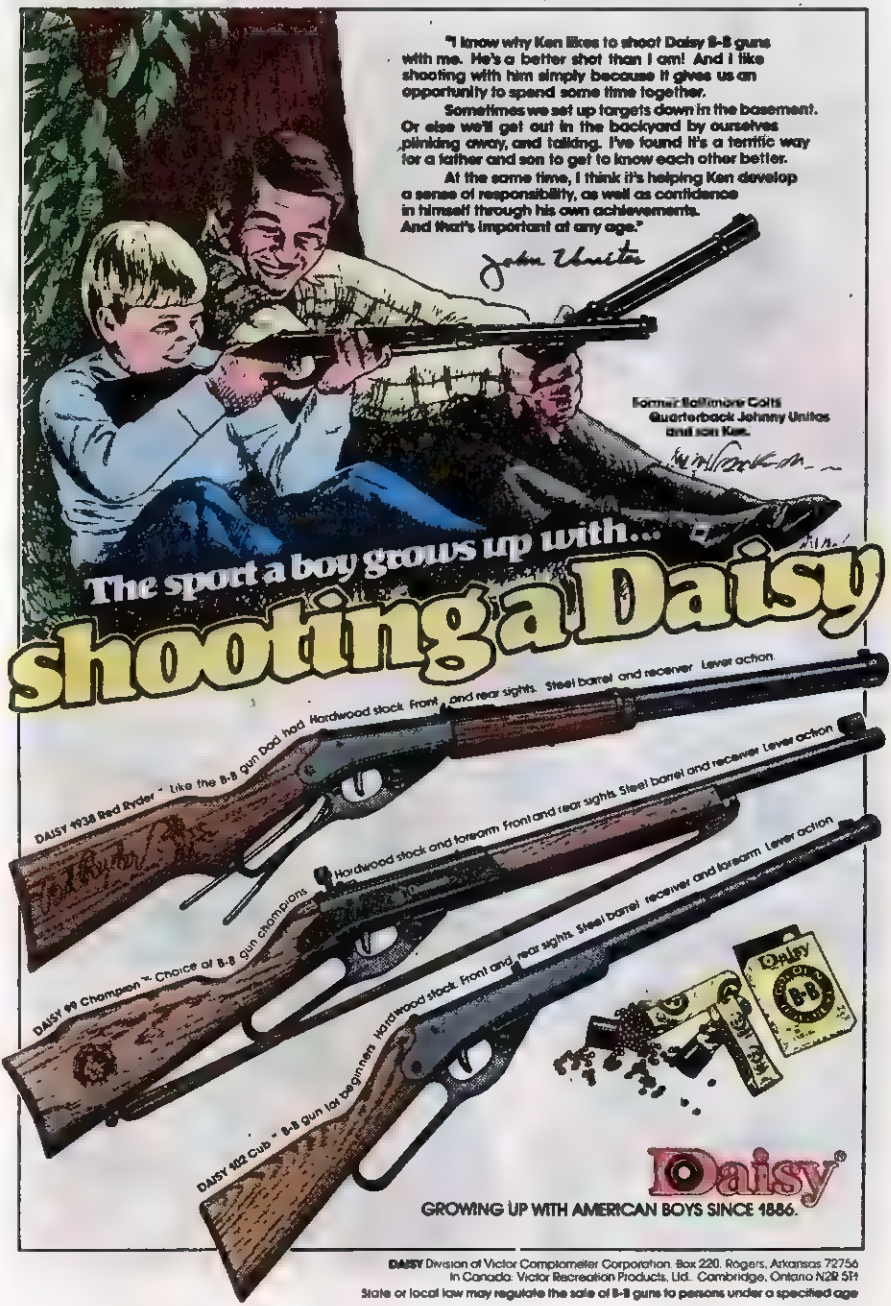
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BUT, AT THAT MOMENT...
WELL, I'LL BE--'
LOOK! A CYCLE!
UH, HI FOLKS!
BRAP! BOAP-CLUNK!
WHEW! THIS CRATE JUST BARELY MADE IT!
I'M GLAD IT DID, PARDNER!
I'VE BEEN WANTING TO SEE ONE OF THESE GADGETS UP CLOSE!
I WAS HOPING MAYBE I COULD FIX MY ENGINE HERE! I HEARD YOU HAVE A SMALL MACHINE SHOP!
YEP! I'LL SQUARE IT WITH THE OWNER SO YOU CAN USE IT! LET ME HELP YOU PUSH IT OVER THERE!
BY THE WAY, THE NAME'S MATT HAWK!
I'M JOHNNY BLAZE!
LATER...
HOW'S IT COMING, JOHNNY?
OKAY, I GUESS!
IT OUGHT TO BE AS GOOD AS NEW IN A COUPLE HOURS!
GREAT!
I'VE GOT THINGS ALL SET UP! THERE'S A SPARE ROOM IN THE EMPLOYEE BUNK-HOUSE THAT THE OWNER SAYS YOU CAN STAY IN, AS LONG AS YOU WORK OFF YOUR MEALS!
STAY--? BUT...I--
WELL, WHY NOT? I GUESS I'M IN NO REAL HURRY! IT MIGHT BE A BLAST!

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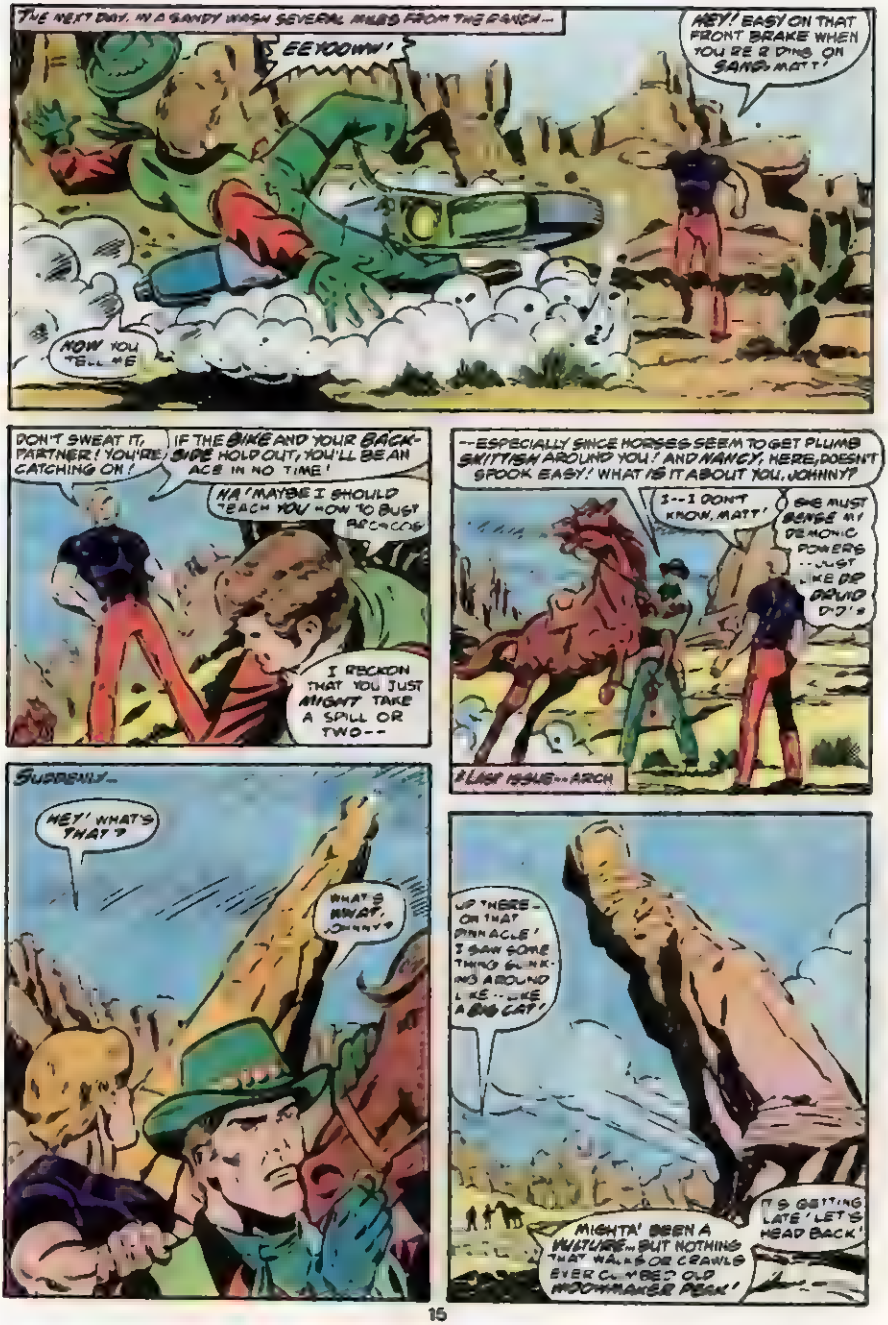
THE NEXT DAY, IN A SANDY WASH SEVERAL MILES FROM THE RANCH...
EEYOOWW!
HEY! EASY ON THAT FRONT BRAKE WHEN YOU'RE R'DING ON SAND, MATT!
NOW YOU TELL ME
DON'T SWEAT IT, PARTNER! YOU'RE CATCHING ON!
IF THE BIKE AND YOUR BACKSIDE HOLD OUT, YOU'LL BE AN ACE IN NO TIME!
HA! MAYBE I SHOULD TEACH YOU HOW TO BUST RECORDS
I RECKON THAT YOU JUST MIGHT TAKE A SPILL OR TWO--
--ESPECIALLY SINCE HORSES SEEM TO GET PLUMB SKITTISH AROUND YOU! AND NANCY, HERE, DOESN'T SPOOK EASY! WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOU, JOHNNY?
I--I DON'T KNOW, MATT!
SHE MUST SENSE MY DEMONIC POWERS--JUST LIKE DR DRUID DID!
LAST ISSUE--ARCH
SUDDENLY--
HEY! WHAT'S THAT?
WHAT'S WRONG, JOHNNY?
UP THERE--ON THAT PINNACLE! I SAW SOMETHING MOVING AROUND LIKE--LIKE A BIG CAT!
MIGHTA' BEEN A MATURE--BUT NOTHING THAT WALKS OR CRAWLS EVER CLIMBED OLD MOONHAMMER PEAK!
IT'S GETTING LATE! LET'S HEAD BACK!

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LATER BACK AT THE RANCH--
--SHOULD HAVE SEEN ME RIDE I WAS A NATURAL'
YEAH A NATURAL DISASTER'
BOYS, I SWEAR I'M GOING TO BUY ME ONE OF THEM MACHINES--
--AND GET OUT ON THE ROAD LIKE JOHNNY, VROOOOM'
THINK I'LL... GET SOME ZZ-Z-Z'S'
ONCE OUTSIDE JOHNNY BLAZE SEEKS THE SHELTERING GLOOM BEHIND THE BARN, AND THERE CONCEALED IN DARKNESS, HE TRANSFORMS AND CREATES A MYSTIC CYCLE OF GOD-FIRE--
I SET THE SEE... NO THAT WHEN JOHNNY BLAZE RIDES OFF-- MATT IS GOING TO WANT TO TAG ALONG'
I HAD TO GET AWAY! I HAVE TO BE ALONE... TO THINK!
AND I KNOW JUST THE PLACE!
WIDOWMAKER PEAK! MATT SAID NOTHING THAT WALKS OR CRAWLS COULD SCALE IT. MAYBE NOT..
--BUT THAT DOESN'T RULE OUT SPIRIT CYCLISTS'
EERILY SILENTLY DEFYING THE LAWS OF NATURE THE MACABRE MOTORCYCLE ASCENDS THE SHEER STONE SPIRE THAT NO THUNDERING MAN MADE MACHINE HAS EVER BEEN TO CONQUER
THE SPIRIT'S RIDER HURTLES FORWARD, DRAWING ON HIS STRENGTH AND THE SUPERNATURAL POWER OF HIS MOUNT--
--UNTIL
MADE IT, I'M ALONE, BUT GOOD
NOW IF I COULD ONLY FIGURE OUT WHY THAT'S SO IMPORTANT TO ME!
I ALWAYS WAS A LONER EVEN BEFORE I BECAME GHOST RIDER-- BUT... DO I REALLY WANT IT THAT WAY, OR DEEP INSIDE AM I AFRAID TO HAVE A CLOSE FRIEND?
WHILE THE SPECTRAL CYCLIST SEARCHES HIS SOUL ATOP WIDOWMAKER PEAK--

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--ALONE IN HIS ROOM, A TROUBLED EX-AVENGER ALSO PONDERS
HMM! HAVEN'T HAD THIS OUTFIT ON FOR A LONG WHILE. FEELS GOOD!
I'M CLEARLY A GENIUS TO EVEN BE CONSIDERING GOING BACK TO STICK AROUND MUCH LONGER--
--AND IT WOULDN'T BE MUCH FUN CLOWNING AROUND HERE BY MYSELF!
IT'S BEEN A GAS, BUT I GUESS I KNEW IT WOULD HEAR THE END OF IT
THE PARTY'S OVER
I WONDER IF THE AVENGERS WOULD CONSIDER TAKING BACK A SLIGHTLY RUSTY BOW-SLINGER
AW, WHAT AM I HOPING FOR? IT ISN'T LIKE THE WORLD'S ABOUT TO END OR ANYTHING!
JUST THEN
WHAT'S THIS?
A TRACK IN THE DUST IN LOOKS LIKE A HUGE PAW PRINT!
SUDDENLY
SHOTS--! FROM THE RANCH!
BAM BAM
WHAT'S TROUBLE
INDEED, AT THAT MOMENT AT THE CHEERY-O'S EMPLOYEES' BUNKHOUSE...
MY SLUGS BOUNCE RIGHT OFF THAT THING! IT'S GETTING AWAY WITH HAWKEYE!
IT'S TOO BAD YOU HAD TO SPOIL ME KIDNAPPING HAWKEYE! I DIDN'T WANT TO KILL ANYONE ELSE
--BUT I WARNED YOU, COWBOY, THE MANTICORE WON'T BE STOPPED!
CRASH!

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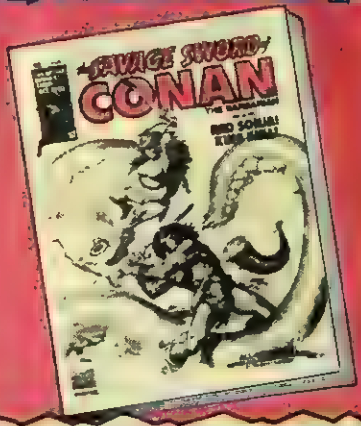

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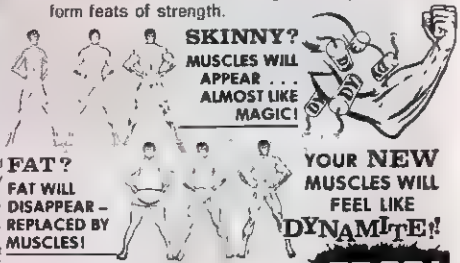
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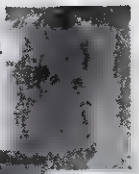
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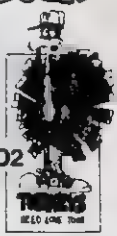

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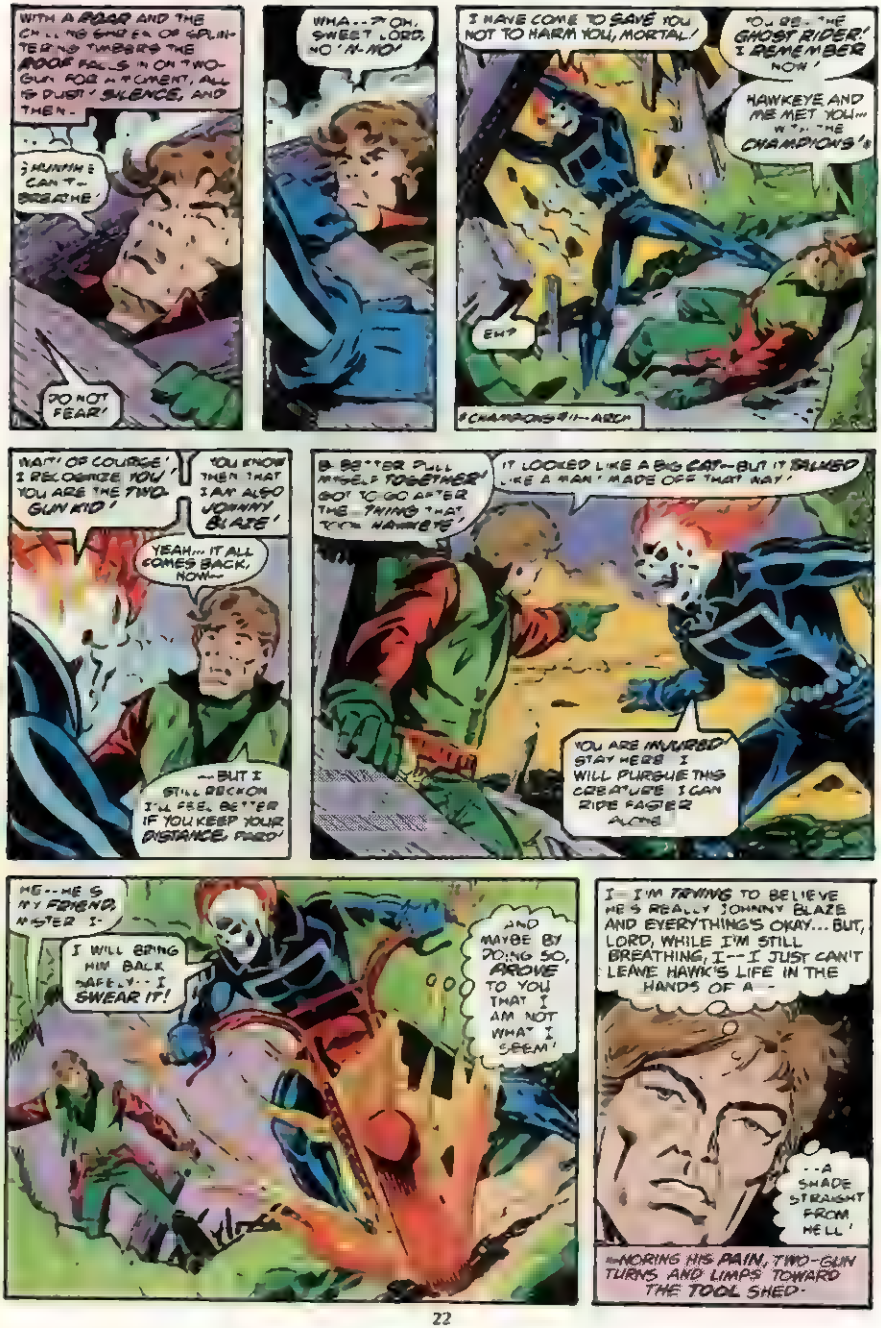
WITH A ROAR AND THE CRASHING SHOWER OF SPLINTERED TIMBERS THE DOOR FALLS IN ON TWO-GUN FOR A MOMENT, ALL IS DUST! SILENCE, AND THEN-
HUNTH E CAN'T--BREATHE!
DO NOT FEAR!
WHA--? OH, SWEET LORD, NO! N-NO!
I HAVE COME TO SAVE YOU NOT TO HARM YOU, MORTAL!
YOU BE THE GHOST RIDER! I REMEMBER NOW!
HAWKEYE AND ME MET YOU--WITH THE CHAMPIONS!
EH?
CHAMPIONS #11--ARCH
WAIT! OF COURSE! I RECOGNIZE YOU! YOU ARE THE TWO-GUN KID!
YOU KNOW THEN THAT I AM ALSO JOHNNY BLAZE!
YEAH... IT ALL COMES BACK, NOW--
--BUT I STILL BECKON I'LL FEEL BETTER IF YOU KEEP YOUR DISTANCE, PARD!
I BETTER PULL MYSELF TOGETHER! GOT TO GO AFTER THE--THING THAT TOOK HAWKEYE!
IT LOOKED LIKE A BIG CAT--BUT IT TALKED LIKE A MAN! MADE OFF THAT WAY!
YOU ARE INJURED! STAY HERE! I WILL PURSUE THIS CREATURE! I CAN RIDE FASTER ALONE!
HE--HE'S MY FRIEND, MISTER I-
I WILL BRING HIM BACK SAFELY--I SWEAR IT!
AND MAYBE BY DOING SO, PROVE TO YOU THAT I AM NOT WHAT I SEEM!
I--I'M TRYING TO BELIEVE HE'S REALLY JOHNNY BLAZE AND EVERYTHING'S OKAY... BUT, LORD, WHILE I'M STILL BREATHING, I--I JUST CAN'T LEAVE HAWK'S LIFE IN THE HANDS OF A--
--A SHADE STRAIGHT FROM HELL!
MUFFLING HIS PAIN, TWO-GUN TURNS AND LIMPS TOWARD THE TOOL SHED.

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--WHILE IN A CANYON, MILES AWAY AN EQUALLY BATTERED BOW-MAN STRUGGLES TO BUY TIME--
AN EXO-SKELETON RIGHT LIKE IRON MAN'S ARMOR ELECTRICALLY POWERED!
VERY GOOD, HAWK-EYE! YOU'RE NOT AS STUPID AS I WAS TOLD!
THIS BATTLE-SUIT MADE FOR ME BY THE SAME SCIENTIST WHO CREATED THE HELLCAT COSTUME FOR BRAND INDUSTRIES!
THAT COSTUME HAS SINCE FALLEN INTO THE HANDS OF A GIRL NAMED PATSY WALKER, WHO'S NOW A PAR-TIME AVENGER! MY EMPLOYERS WANT THE HELLCAT SUIT BACK AND THEIR SCHEME REQUIRES A DEAD AVENGER--
--YOU SINCE, OF COURSE YOU'RE THE EASIEST MARK! YOU KNOW, I'M SORRY I HAVE TO DO THIS--
TELL ME, MANTICORE, WHAT DOES MURDER PAY THESE DAYS? WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU--?
BLIND FOOL! OBVIOUSLY, MY LEGS! THEY WILL--
WHO--?
THERE THEY ARE! HAWK-EYE'S ALIVE!
--JUST BARELY, IT LOOKS LIKE!
GOT TO KEEP THAT THING AWAY FROM HIM!
A WALL OF FIRE! WAIT-- OF COURSE! YOU'RE THE GHOST RIDER -ONE OF THE CHAMPIONS!
BAH! YOUR "HELLFIRE" TRICKS DON'T SCARE ME!
UNH!
HE TOTALLED MY FLAME-CYCLE WITH ONE SWEEP OF HIS TAIL! THIS WON'T BE EASY!
FWOOSH
AT LEAST I'LL LAND BETWEEN HIM AND HAWK!
HAH!
YOU SHOULD HAVE STAYED WHEREVER YOU POPPED UP FROM IDIOT! YOU'RE GOING TO REGRET INTERFERING!
THE LEGENDARY MANTICORE HAD THE BODY OF A LION AND THE TAIL OF A SCORPION!
LIKE MY NAMESAKE, I, TOO, HAVE A DEADLY STING--

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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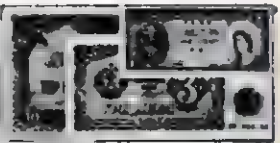

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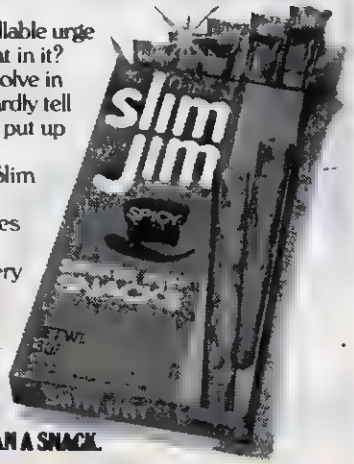

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WHAT? YOU STILL STAND?! BUT--
FOOL! I AM NOT MERELY MORTAL AS YOU SURELY ARE BENEATH THAT SUIT!
OR IS HE? HIS HIND LEGS ARE FORMED LIKE A LION'S! A MAN'S BODY COULDN'T FIT INSIDE THAT RIG! CAN IT BE HE'S ONLY HALF HUMAN?
BLAST--! MY HELLFIRE ISN'T AFFECTING HIM!
I DON'T CARE IF YOU ARE SOME KIND OF SPIRIT! I WON'T LET YOU SCARE ME OFF! IF I CAN'T KILL YOU WITH MY LASER--
--THEN I'LL TEAR YOU APART WITH MY CLAWS!
YOU DON'T STAND A CHANCE AGAINST THEM!
WHILE I WAS SCOUTING THIS AREA I CLIMBED WIDOWMAKER PEAK BY DIGGING MY TALONS INTO SOLID ROCK!
...NNH! HE'S STRONG--
--BUT--UNFF--I THINK... I'M STRONGER! THOUGH HIS ARMOR SEEMS TO PROTECT HIM FROM MY HELLFIRE--
ARRHH!
--FOR SHEER POWER, IT'S NOWHERE NEAR IRON MAN'S ARMOR! I THINK I CAN CRACK THIS SHELL... AND THEN--

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BUT AT THAT MOMENT--
HANG ON, PARDNER!
BLAM! POW!
WHA--? TWO-GUN--! ON MY REAL BIKE--!
RRR-ROAR!
SUDDENLY, WITH DESPERATE SWIFTNESS, THE MANTICORE LEAPS AWAY FROM THE STARTLED GHOST RIDER AND, IN ONE PROFESSIONAL LEAP--
ANN-H!
GOT YOU!
A MANTICORE SPRINGS LIKE A REAL CAT IN TH' THOSE BLASTED ANIMAL HIND LIMBS!
TWO-GUN COULDN'T DODGE--HE'S TOO INEXPERIENCED!
ALL RIGHT, GHOST--OR DEMON, OR WHATEVER YOU ARE--CLEAR OUT--! OR I'LL TEAR TH' COWBOY'S HEAD OFF!
NOW WHAT? DO I ATTACK AND WATCH TWO-GUN DIE--OR BACK OFF AND UNDERMAN HANK?
UNLESS--IF I'VE RATTLED HIM AS MUCH AS IT SEEMS I HAVE--
--MAYBE I CAN BLUFF HIM!
STUPID HUMAN! I AM NO EARTH-BORN HERO TO BE BARGAINED WITH!
I AM A SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE FROM THE DEPTHS OF HELL!
I CARE NOT ABOUT YOUR VICTIM! I EXIST ONLY TO EXACT DUE RETRIBUTION!
DO YOUR WORST! TAKE HIS WRETCHED LIFE NOW! EQUISITELY I CAN TORTURE YOU THEN! MY REVENGE WILL BE HIDEOUS AND UNENDING!
AS THE GHOST RIDER STRIDES FORWARD A WAVE OF FEAR SURGES OVER THE MANTICORE, AND HIS GRIP ON TWO-GUN LOOSENS EVER SO SLIGHTLY--

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MARVEL BULLPEN BULLETINS

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STAN LEE'S SOAPBOX

Okay!, World, you can stop holding your breath now! Here's the info everyone's been waiting for... the list of fantastic females featured in the latest "Origins" book to be published by Simon & Schuster, and going on sale in October at book stores everywhere! Pay close attention now— there may be a test at the end of the column! Titled THE SUPERHERO WOMEN (what else?), we're featuring blockbustin' yarns about Medusa, Black Widow, Sue Storm, The Cat, Ms. Marvel, the Fabulous Femizons, Hela and Sif, Shanna the She-Devil, the Wonderful Wasp, and the ever-lovin' Red Sonja! Naturally, you'll also meet all the happy-go-lucky heroes whom the gals have been associated with, as well! How do you see why we're suggesting you reserve your copy of THE SUPERHERO WOMEN as early as possible? This one promises to outsell all the rest! And, speaking of exciting new publications, in case you've been wondering what the mysterious PIZZAZZ is all about, here's the inside scoop. It's a brand new publication for Marvel's younger readers, from ages 8 or 9 to early teens. Printed on glossy paper with puzzles, games, stories, articles, and more colorful pix than you can wiggle a web at, it emphasizes features about tv and records, with a generous sprinkling of our own omnipresent super heroes thrown in! The first issue will only be on sale in the southeast portion of the U.S. (for some reason that presently escapes me!), so if you can't survive another minute without it, you'll find a subscription blank somewhere or other in some of our mags at some time or other. (Nobody can accuse us of not being definite and precise!) Finally, just to whet your awesome appetite, here are some of the mighty Marvel heroes which Universal TV is currently filming for prime-time showing—live act on! over CBS TV this fall! The Incredible Hulk! Sub-Mariner! And, in preparation: Captain America, The Human Torch, and one of our fabulous females, as well. As soon as we decide which one she'll be, I'll clue you in! There's even more to come, so stay tuned, titanic ones! And, while you're waiting and basking in all this mellifluous munificence, remember—always be gentle to your fellow man—he may be related to Irving Forbush!

Excelsior!

Stan

ITEM! After all the goodies set forth by Stan the Man in his soapbox, can there be any other tidbits with which to tempt, titillate, and otherwise tantalize you? Well, if we say no, it'd be diverting... but it'd also be lying. For instance, we've got two of our most awesome Annuals to ease the burden of any back-to-school blues you might be suffering. First, there's the TWO IN-ONE ANNUAL. This time the two are The Thing and Spider-Man, but thanks to writer/artist JIM STARLIN (and also to a nifty new addition to our inking ranks, JOE RUBINSTEIN) there's also about a jillion super-guests joining them for this frantic finish to the war with the mad god Thanos which began in this year's AVENGERS ANNUAL. Next, from the titanic team of ROY THOMAS and JOHN BUSCEMA, there's the CONAN ANNUAL which puts the bonus-length size of these books to bountiful use with a carefully concocted *sequel* to the only full-length novel Conan's creator ROBERT E. HOWARD ever wrote, namely CONAN THE CONQUEROR. And if all these somewhat less than subtle hints aren't enough to send you stampeding to your local comics outlet, then we'll just have to trot out another...

ITEM! Besides the duo of double-length dazzlers plugged above, September also marks the MARVEL PREMIERE appearance of the tempestuous TORPEDO. His guest stints last year in DAREDEVIL drew an unprecedented pile of requests to try him in his own solo series. And, though it sometimes takes us a while to come through, the Bullpen never turns a deaf ear to the demands of you Marvelites. Hence, in a special two-issue saga, the Torpedo... as masterminded by his originator, writer/editor MARV WOLFMAN, with penciling by the late BOB BROWN and inking by Amiable AL MILGROM. You've been asking for this one, fellow fantasy fanciers, so don't let it get away from you

ITEM! It's mid-summer as your artful armadillo hunts and pecks his way through these pertinent passages, and that means that at least one day each week a horde of Bullpenners desert their desks and drawing boards the instant closing time approaches and surge toward Central Park's Sheep Meadow for another scintillating session of softball Marvel style. This year's team captains are 'Nuff Said NELSON YOMTOV and Jubilant JOHN ROMITA JR., who thus far have guided our fantastic lads through victories over Gronlet & Dunlap and Magazine Management, and cinched up sagging spirits over defeats from Plenum Publishing and a certain weekly newspaper whose title does not fall within the bounds of the comics code. A long season still stretches ahead of us, so watch this space for further word of triumphs and tragedies on the softball diamond. But lest you think the Bullpenners are strictly one sport athletes, be advised that the Central Park grasslands also shake once a week from the thunder of a growing group of Marvel volleyball enthusiasts. There's no established league in this case, but that doesn't prevent much spirited spiking and striking from such Bullpen luminaries as JIM (Trouble) SHOOTER, Lively LEN WEIN, Heavenly HELLEN KATZ (organizer of the games as well as guardian of the gates of our ninth floor offices), and Wondrous WALT SIMONSON, to say nothing of guest appearances by some exercise-starved employees of our Distinguished Competition (the only problem with them is finding telephone booths for them all to change in). Let's face it, friends, this summer season the hills of Central Park are alive with the sound of muscle strain.

ITEM! Hey, it was like old times around the hallowed halls last week when erstwhile editor-in-chief ROY THOMAS dropped in for a visit. The Rascally One flew in from his West Coast home and stopped around to chat about CONAN and all his other books, particularly our two-volume Marvel Treasury Edition of STAR WARS (Part one is currently on sale—if you're lucky—and part two will be newsstand bound in October). In addition, Roy filled us in on the many movie and TV deals he has in the works (and as fast as they become final, we'll be letting you know, Marvelite). He then rushed on to Philadelphia for an appearance at the July 4th Comicon as keynote speaker. All that California sunshine and salt sea air hasn't slowed Mr. T. down a bit. Keep it up, Roy, you're an inspiration to us all!

ITEM! If you haven't subscribed to FOOM (And if we have to tell you that that stands for Friends Of Ol' Marvel, turn in your Irving Forbush decoder badges), then now is surely the time. Next ish, #19, will be the special DEFENDERS issue; everybody's favorite non-group was voted by FOOM readers as the subject they'd most like to see covered. Coming up after that, editor DAVE KRAFT is readying an all Edgar Rice Burroughs issue. So, don't lose out on all the inside info, subscribe today! And come see us here again, same time, same page next month.

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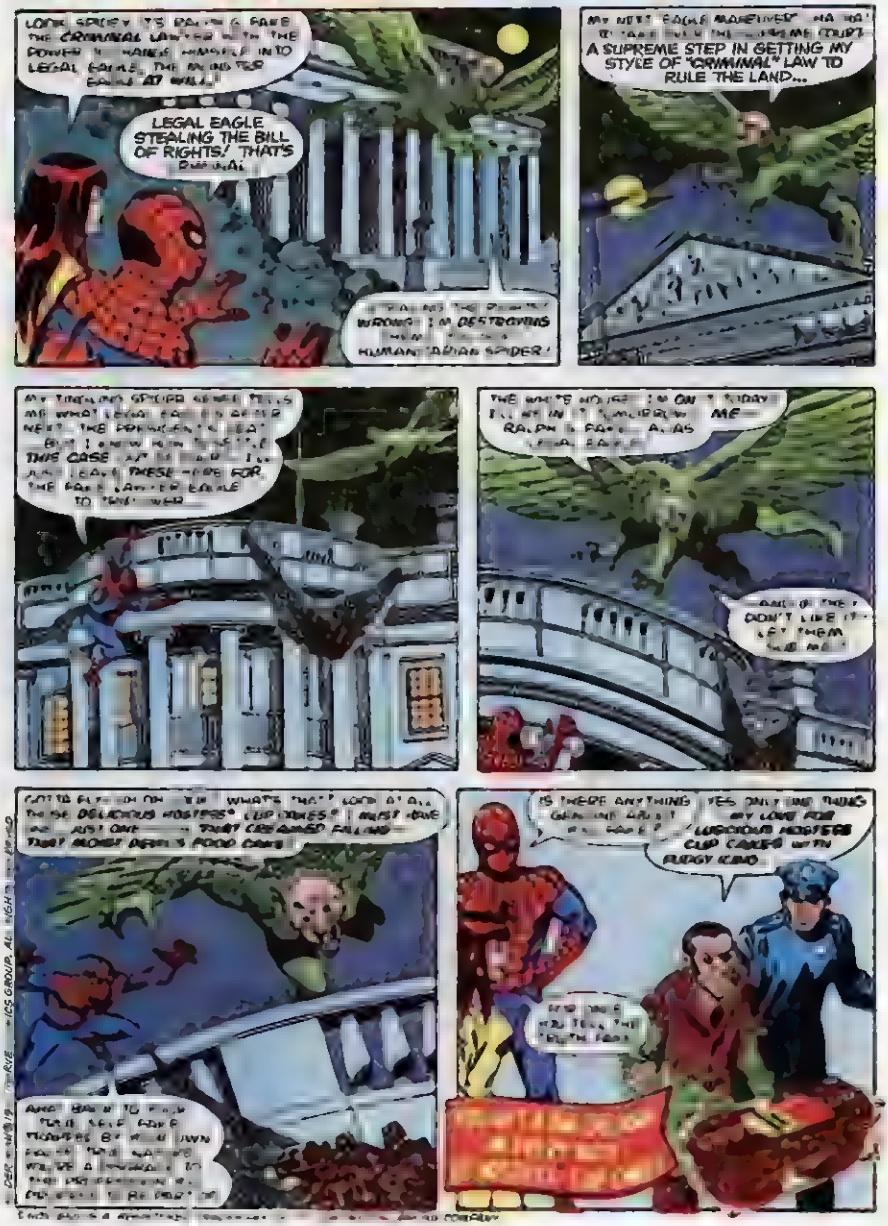
LOOK, SPIDEY! IT'S RALPH B. FAKE THE CRIMINAL LAWYER WITH THE POWER TO MAKE HIMSELF INTO LEGAL EAGLE, THE MINISTER EAGLE AT WILL!
LEGAL EAGLE STEALING THE BILL OF RIGHTS! THAT'S WRONG!
I'M DESTROYING THE PEOPLE'S HUMAN DEFENSE SPIDER!
MY NEXT EAGLE MASTERPIECE HA HA! IT WILL BE THE SUPREME COURT!
A SUPREME STEP IN GETTING MY STYLE OF "CRIMINAL" LAW TO RULE THE LAND...
MY TIMELINES SPIDER SENSE TELLS ME WHAT LEGAL EAGLE IS DOING NEXT! THE SUPREME COURT! BUT I KNOW HOW TO STOP HIM! THIS CASE AT LAW I'LL JUST LEAVE THESE HERE FOR THE FAKE LAWYER EAGLE TO FIND!
THE WHITE HOUSE! I'M ON A FRIDAY PLANE IN A HURRY! RALPH B. FAKE AS LEGAL EAGLE!
AND IF THEY DON'T LIKE IT, LET THEM SUE ME!
GOTTA FLY! OH, BOY! WHAT'S THAT? LOOK AT ALL THOSE DELICIOUS HOSTESS® CUPCAKES! I MUST HAVE ONE... JUST ONE... THAT CREAMED FILLING... THAT MOIST DEVIL'S FOOD CAKE...
AND BACK TO MY LEGAL EAGLE MASTERPIECE! BY RULING THAT WARRANTLESS WIRETAPS ARE LEGAL, I'LL BE ABLE TO SPY ON ANYONE I WANT! AND NO ONE WILL BE ABLE TO STOP ME!
IS THERE ANYTHING GREATER THAN A HOSTESS® CUPCAKE?
YES, ONLY ONE THING: MY LOVE FOR LUSCIOUS HOSTESS® CUPCAKES WITH BUDDY KEMP.
AND WHO'S YOU TELL THE TRUTH?

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MANTICORE'S EMPLOYERS MUST BE FOUND--
--AND BROUGHT TO JUSTICE.
BUT THAT IS A MATTER FOR ANOTHER TIME!
FOR NOW, THE GHOST RIDER CAN FADE--
--AND GOOD OLD JOHNNY BLAZE CAN MAKE HIS COMEBACK!
GOSH, THAT CHANGING FORMS REALLY DRAINS ME! I FEEL LIKE SOGGY JELLO INSIDE!
THAT WAS GREAT SHOOTING HAWKEYE! GOOD THING YOU HAD YOUR TRICK ARROWS WITH YOU!
I WAS HOPING HE'D PANIC AND DROP TWO-GUN SO I COULD RUSH HIM AGAIN, BUT--
WHAT'S WRONG? THEY'RE LOOKING AT ME AS IF I WERE A LEPER!
OH. I GET IT! MY DEMON ACT WORKED ON THEM EVEN BETTER THAN IT DID ON MANTICORE!
GUYS, I WAS-- JUST ... UH... BLUFFING-- Y'KNOW?
UH... SURE, BLAZE!
UH... FUNNY HOW ALL THE WAY OUT HERE I'VE STILL GOT BAD GUYS TRACKING ME DOWN! I GUESS ONCE YOU'RE AN AVENGER, YOU REALLY CAN'T EVER GET AWAY FROM IT.
YEAH. I UNDER-STAND... IT FOLLOWS YOU EVERYWHERE!
JUST LIKE A CURSE... JUST LIKE A HELLISH NIGHTMARE INSIDE YOU THAT HAS A GRIP ON YOUR LIFE AND YOUR SOUL YOU CAN NEVER, EVER ESCAPE!

NEXT: POSSIBLY THE MOST SHOCK-FILLED TALE OF TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY EVER!

EVIL IS THE ORB!

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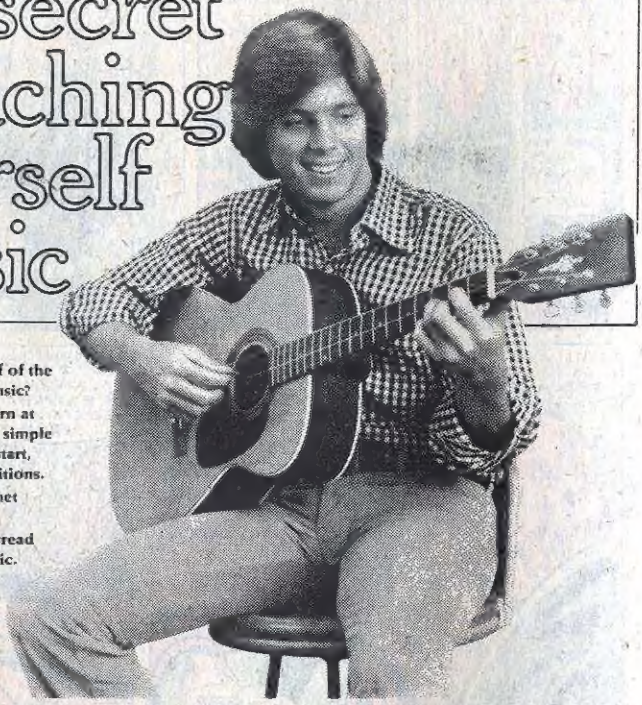
The secret of teaching yourself music



Why keep depriving yourself of the thrill of making your own music?

Here's a pleasant way to learn at home in spare time. You play simple familiar tunes right from the start, then more advanced compositions.

Choose piano, guitar or spinet organ.

No gimmicks—you learn to read notes, play regular sheet music.

It really works! Thousands now play who never could.

It may seem odd at first – the idea of teaching yourself music. You might think you need a private teacher at $4 to $10 per hour to stand beside you and explain everything you should do – and to tell you when you've made a mistake.

But surprising as it seems, you need no such thing. Thousands of people just like you have taught themselves to play with the U.S. School of Music courses. By mail. And you can too.

With our lessons, you learn to play the right way – by note from regular sheet music. Without any gadgetry or gimmickry. And all it costs you is just pennies a day.

You don't need any previous musical training. Our lessons start you off "from scratch" with clear word-and-picture instructions. A lot of the songs you practice first are simple tunes you've heard many times. And since you already know how these tunes are supposed to sound, you can tell immediately when you've "got them right."

Then you go on to more advanced pieces. By this time you can tell if your notes and timing are right, even without ever having heard the songs before. Sooner than you might think possible, you'll be able to play whatever kind of music you like. Folk. Popular. Classical. Show and dance tunes. Hymns.

You learn in your spare time, in the privacy and comfort of your own home. There's no one standing over you to make you nervous. And because you teach yourself, you can set your own pace. You're free to spend as much time mastering any lesson as you wish.

How effective are the lessons? Ask Jeffrey Livingston of York, Pa. "I thought the organ course was excellent," he writes. "I knew almost nothing about playing an instrument before I enrolled. Now I can play not only the organ, but the piano too. My new music ability has enabled me to play at churches and small conventions. I am even considering making music my career."

And, Cecelia Feeney of Vineland, N.J. reports: "It's like a dream come true. Knowing how to play and read music has given me new self-confidence."

If you've ever dreamed of being able to play the piano, the guitar, or the spinet organ, why not learn more about our convenient, economical way to learn? Send for our free booklet *Be Your Own Music Teacher*. With it we'll include a free "Note-Finder." There's no obligation. Just mail the coupon to the U.S. SCHOOL OF MUSIC. A Home Study School Since 1898. 417 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois 60605.

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I'm interested in learning the secret of teaching myself to play the instrument checked below. Please send me, FREE, illustrated booklet. (Free "Note-Finder" included with Piano or Guitar booklet.) I am under no obligation.

☐ Guitar (pick style) ☐ Piano
☐ Spinet Organ (2 keyboards)

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Mrs. _____ Age _____
Miss
(PRINT NAME) (LAST NAME)

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YEAH, THOSE VINYL BALLS ARE JUST TOO SLICK!

AW, WHAT DIFFERENCE CAN THE BALL MAKE?

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WHAT A MAGIC TOUCH!

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